

1949

OK

Grand Master's Address

To the Members of the M.W. Grand Lodge of Ancient
Free and Accepted Masons of this Grand Jurisdiction.

Brethren:

I am pleased to see so many members of our Grand Lodge present with us this morning; you are all most welcome. It is a privilege and honor to bid you welcome to this forty-fourth annual communication of the Grand Lodge of Alberta. I thank you each and every one, for your presence, and I trust you will enjoy every minute of your visit here. It is my sincere hope that you will receive instruction and inspiration to take home to your lodge, that will help you in the great work of Freemasonry in your community.

To you who are here for the first time, I wish to bid you welcome, and also to give you a word of advice: Do not take yourself too seriously. I well remember my first attendance at Grand Lodge, and how disappointed I was with myself for the very little I got out of that Grand Lodge meeting. But the more I pondered over the work that I saw, and the things I heard, the more the light came to me. I studied the proceedings and really learned what the work of Grand Lodge was. On my next attendance I felt more at home. I felt that I was a part of what was going on, even though I never said a word.

So I recommend that you keep your eyes and ears open, for much must be done in the next two days. The officers of Grand Lodge are your elected and appointed representatives. It is you, the Masters and Wardens, together with the Past Masters, that are the members of Grand Lodge and its voting strength. You are the shareholders, and we the board of directors of this great organization, the Grand Lodge of Alberta.

This Grand Lodge communication is most democratic in its workings. We follow your wishes as expressed in the Constitution, and, though it may appear that everything is cut and dried before being presented to this communication, I would assure you that such is not the case.

The items of business to be presented have all been carefully scrutinized by the Board of General Purposes, your directors, to use a business term. They bring them before you with their approval, or otherwise, for your discussion and action. This is to save your time, as well as to protect Grand Lodge by having everything prepared according to the Constitution.

So to you who are here for the first time, I say, be of great courage and good cheer, you are one of a very important body. You represent a very important unit, your lodge. We expect your help and co-operation, and trust that you will have a worth while report to give your lodge on your return home. You are most welcome—come again and again.

A year ago you elected and installed me as your Grand Master. I felt very much overwhelmed by your confidence, and in spite of years of preparation, I entered upon my duties with an open mind and a feeling of great humility. I knew there was much to be done, If I justified the great confidence you had placed in me.

As time marched on, it was easily seen that the responsibilities increased greatly. I have endeavored to discharge the duties of Grand Master to the best of my abilities, and now place before you my report.

It has been a very busy year, and, as we receive and discuss the various reports, I am sure you will share with me that feeling of pride and joy which goes with success and achievement, for I think we have had a very good year.

While world conditions are still most unsettled, and chaotic, we in Canada are very fortunate, and more especially so here in this wonderful province of Alberta. In our economic life, we have progressed even beyond our dreams. Our people have reaped rich returns from their labors. The great developments taking place in Agriculture, Mining and Oil production will increase the wealth of everyone. Rural electrification will bring conveniences and joy to many of our people.

Let us not just think of these in terms of material worth alone, but also in terms of service to mankind. Let us be happy ourselves and communicate that happiness to others. Above all let us return thanks to the Great Architect of the Universe for the many blessings we enjoy—for the peace and brotherly love among the people of Alberta, for we have been, and are, most fortunate in our associations.

While we are deeply appreciative of our present position, let us not forget our responsibilities as citizens, to make the most of our opportunities, that our progress may continue.

God gave us men and leaders of vision, for a people without vision shall perish. It is to be much regretted that the world of Freemasonry is still shrinking, and many parts of the globe are enveloped in impenetrable darkness, and the light of Masonry is extinguished by the forces of evil. It is my hope that this is only temporary, and in the near future may its beneficent influence spread wide and wider among the nations of the world.

In preparation for such a time, it is necessary that we keep bright and unsullied the great teachings of our Craft.

My motto for the year has been: "The object of our meeting in the lodge is of two-fold nature, namely, social intercourse and moral instruction. Our meetings are intended to cultivate and enlighten the mind, to induce the habit of virtue, and to strengthen the fundamental principles of our order: Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth". Wherever I have had an opportunity to speak to the brethren, I have tried to encourage and develop a genuine interest in the teachings and work of our Craft.

It has pleased me greatly to see the large numbers at meetings where I was to speak. This encourages me to believe the brethren have a genuine interest in their Masonry, and are seeking more light

in its practical uses. It has filled me with pride and satisfaction to note the activities of our subordinate lodges, for I sincerely believe there is much interest shown in the study and teachings of our great Fraternity.

I am satisfied that our brethren, deep down in their hearts, desire to take their Freemasonry very seriously, and are seeking ways of learning its practical uses and it is the responsibility of we who are the leaders to show the way, that is to put the Craft to work and give them instruction for their labor. Let us not fail them.

District Meetings

We now have eighteen districts in our Jurisdiction, each presided over by a District Deputy Grand Master, who organizes and conducts one meeting of his constituent lodges during his term of office. It was my privilege and good fortune to be able to attend all but two of these meetings. It was necessary for me to ask the Deputy Grand Master to attend at Carbon and Hanna in my stead.

To Brethren of these districts I express my regret at being unable to meet with them. I know I missed two very good meetings, and also the genuine friendship of many worthy brethren.

As Grand Master, I have been inspired by some points brought up by the meetings, and also depressed by others.

The obvious enjoyment of the brethren at the presence of their Grand Master, and the great respect paid that office, must of necessity arouse in one the desire to make the meeting of great value to them. This becomes more aparent when it is realized that in some districts some of the brethren must travel two hundred miles.

I have spent considerable time discussing with brethren the value of the District Meeting, and how it might be increased in value to the members of the lodges. It has been frequently suggested to me that the District Meeting as at present carried out is not filling any real place in our Masonic life. With this point before me, I have tried to search out the cause of its failure, and to look for the remedy.

First, I find there is no definite duty assigned to the annual district meeting, except that our Constitution directs that such a meeting be held, and that a District Deputy Grand Maser be chosen by ballot. Surely this is not sufficient reason for calling such a meeting?

Some have called it the little Grand Lodge, but that is not correct, because Grand Lodge is an administrative body, and the District meetings have no such function. It is unfortunate that in recent years there has been used on the District Meeting Program, the words Master and Wardens. This appears to have kept many junior officers and master masons from attending. This defeats the purpose of the District Meeting. It should be of special value to junior officers and aid them in their preparation for advancement.

No one denies that the annual meeting does much to promote harmony among the neighboring lodges and also promotes social intercourse among the brethren, but still there must be more that can be accomplished.

In the last few years we have tried to bring before the brethren some of the foremost problems in Freemasonry, in the form of prepared papers, and by discussion assist the brethren to find solutions for them. In the majority of the cases we have had presented some very excellent papers, which provoked some splendid discussions and were of real value to the brethren. The success of this type of meeting depends on the amount of time and thought put on the papers by the brethren selected to give them. If the paper was not well prepared and presented, the meeting showed its disappointment. I am not convinced that exemplification of degrees and ceremonies would repay the brethren for the time necessary to do them. We need help along these lines, and it might be a good policy to have a custodian of the work attend the meetings. In most cases this would require two: one from either Rite. I think more would be accomplished if the lodges would take the time to compare their work with that authorized by Grand Lodge, and then place well-prepared questions, which they had been unable to find answered by the ritual or constitution, in the question box.

All ceremonies are damaged and impaired, seldom improved, by lack of comparison with the authorized ceremonial. This is noticeable in the reception of the Grand Master and accompanying officers, the toast to the Grand Master and his officers, and balloting.

These shortcomings can be remedied by the responsible officers reading and studying the authorized procedure, so why take up the time of the annual meeting?

I still think that our Installation ceremony gives us good direction, which might be followed in the District Meeting—the object of meeting in the lodge is of a two-fold nature, namely, moral instruction and social intercourse.

The Condition of Masonry

My observations lead me to think that the craft as a whole, in this Grand Jurisdiction, is very much interested in its great mission, and is marching forward with a sure and firm stride.

A perusal of the figures supplied by the Grand Secretary shows a healthy increase in our numbers. It is most gratifying to note that the average age of our new members is low—young men just established in our community life. To me this is a healthy sign, that men seek the benefits of our Craft in the early years of manhood, would indicate that they expect great things from the Craft, and that they have many years to give the Fraternity.

Most of our Constituent Lodges are endeavoring to assimilate these new members in a manner calculated to make them true and active Freemasons.

There appears to be a revival of interest in Masonic education. It is a good practice to encourage our members to read and study, to acquire Masonic knowledge aside from the ritual and lectures. This should give the reader an interest in the Craft, in its history and philosophy, that will make him a working Mason, and thus ensure his enthusiastic support in the coming years, and a guarantee against losing him through lack of interest and unemployment.

The Grand Lodge Bulletin is being used much more year by year, out of the lodge as well as in the lodge room. I am most grateful to M.W. Bro. Sam Harris for the splendid job he is doing as our editor. He is doing a grand job in selecting and editing all the material for the Bulletin. Thank you, Sam Harris.

There has been much activity among our lodges in building and improving their Temples and Lodge rooms: This is as it should be, and denotes a healthy interest in the lodges. I congratulate those Lodges on the completion of their new premises, and especially those shrewd business fellows who paid for the hall when it was completed, thus ensuring the lodge against future financial difficulties.

I approve and highly commend any lodge for the sound policy of spending money and time in improving and furnishing a beautiful and well appointed lodge room. There is nothing that is likely to do more for the prestige and popularity of a lodge than a place that the members may well be proud to point to and say "Our Masonic Temple". It gives them the pride of ownership, which adds immeasurably to their interest in their lodge.

X Note

A great many lodges have found it necessary to raise their initiation fee and some have raised both initiation fee and annual dues. This is in keeping with the times. Lodges have found it necessary to find more money to meet rising costs of everything connected with the running of the Lodge. I would like to sound a note of warning, and perhaps advice. I trust that all lodges will keep their finances in good shape. Do not use every cent you have just because you have it. Some of us have seen times when lodge dues were slow in coming in, and initiation fees were practically unheard of. Just remember Old Man Micawber's advice to David Copperfield.

It is my sincere hope that we may never have a repetition of the lean 30's, but still I would recommend that you all keep your financial affairs well in hand, and not expect these boom days to continue indefinitely. Do not mortgage your future, even if it looks golden.

There is a great demand today for leadership, and our Craft is no exception. I have observed, and I am sure you have also made the same observation, that where there are good live officers, willing and ready to put a little time and effort on their job, the lodge is well out in front, with good attendance and real interest in the work.

X

The Master has a great responsibility and no man should accept that responsible office if he is not willing and able to set his brethren to work, and give them proper instruction for their labors.

Grand Lodge has issued a little booklet for the guidance of Masters in the conduct of their meetings. I strongly recommend all Masters to read, study and put into practical use, the contents thereof. There is nothing that will kill the interest and enthusiasm of the members so quickly as a poorly conducted meeting.

It is a great boon to any lodge to have an efficient secretary, and many lodges in this Jurisdiction owe their present success to the hard work and interest of a good brother who is the secretary. He is usually very well acquainted with the by-laws, constitution, and ritual, and never lets his lodge get off the beaten way.



The Constituent Lodges are doing a fine job with their benevolence, and I have found no cases where there is neglect of this important work. There have been a few cases where disciplinary action has been taken, and other cases where difficulties have been smoothed away by advice and instruction. If all officers study the Constitution thoroughly, they would then be familiar with their duties and responsibilities, and would not run afoul of the law. Remember, we must have law and order and obedience to that law and order, otherwise we would soon be a disreputable mob.

Finally, my brethren, I am very sure we have a splendid spirit of friendship and brotherly love throughout the Jurisdiction. Your splendid hospitality and genuine expressions of friendship for your Grand Master, and the respect paid him and the Grand Lodge, leaves nothing to be desired, unless it would be that I would have liked to do more for the Craft.

Visitations

The office of Grand Master is one of great honor and high prestige, but it carries with it a heavy responsibility to the constituent lodges, and the members at large.

The Grand Master is literally buried by an avalanche of requests, invitations, and announcements. It is part of his duties to accede to and accept as many as he can find time to attend.

It appeared to me that the calls were more numerous than average, but I have endeavored to respond whenever time and circumstances would permit.

It has been my desire to present to as many of our members as possible my views on Freemasonry, its mission, its progress, and its aims and ambitions. I have particularly tried to give the brethren some instruction on what I believe to be the true fundamentals of Freemasonry, and to point out to them how they can be used in a practical way to serve humanity.

I have endeavored to impress upon my brethren the great dignity and high importance of Freemasonry, and have charged them to practice outside the lodge those excellent precepts which are taught within the lodge.

I believe that it is absolutely essential that we all thoroughly understand what Freemasonry is, and what are its aims. We cannot very well teach others if we do not first make ourselves masters of the subject we desire to teach.

It was along these lines that I spoke to a great many of the lodges. I am sorry I could not reach everyone, because I am sure Freemasonry has a mission and that the world has need of that mission being completed.

I am deeply grateful for the manner in which my brethren have received my message, and I am convinced that our members are especially interested in the fundamentals of Freemasonry, and also anxious to see them put to work in a practical way, for the benefit

of mankind. Freemasonry is not for the masses, but we must take the example of Jesus of Nazareth and select our members, individually and with a view that they are to be of help to us in our great and good work. We take a goodman, and by the aid of the V.O.S.L. and our glorious lectures, endeavor to inculcate the great principles of the Craft in such a manner that our members will have that character which will always help them to select the right from the wrong.

Freemasonry is a method of education. We endeavor to develop and improve the human mind. We accomplish our work through the individual. We are happy ourselves and endeavor to communicate that happiness to others.

With a strong and virile membership, so selected and instructed, so enthused with the desire to be of service to the human race, I have no fears for the future welfare of our Craft, and the ultimate progress of our race. Our influence for good will be increased day by day.

I have herewith a complete list of my official visits and wish to assure you all that I have enjoyed every visit and sincerely thank one and all for the great friendliness and hospitality with which I was received, in every case.

I wish to mention the splendid support given me by the good brethren of my own lodge. They have helped and encouraged me in every way possible. It gives me much satisfaction to know that my efforts meet with the approval of those who know me best, for I am the second Grand Master from Eureks No. 10 in the past 20 years.

On September 24th, 1948, they honored me with a grand ball. It was a most successful affair, very largely attended and enthusiastically carried out. A beautiful silver tray, nicely and suitably engraved, was presented to the Grand Master and Mrs. Henry. I felt after that evening that indeed the world was a beautiful place in which to live, and my brethren to be just fine, good and most generous, as well as most loyal, friends.

I enjoyed greatly my visit to the Grand Lodge of Saskatchewan. I was accompanied by our Grand Secretary, M.W. Bro. Geo. Moore. We were most graciously received and royally entertained. By attention to their proceedings and discussions, I learned much that has helped me with my problems. To M.W. Bro. Wilson, Grand Master of Saskatchewan, I say, thank you for a most enjoyable visit.

I visited all the bodies practicing the other branches of Masonry, of which I am a member, with the endeavor to improve our relations with them. I have always considered that they are first Freemasons, and joined some other branch later. It must be our endeavor to keep them interested and employed, that they do not neglect their first lodge.

I am proud of our brethren and the genuine spirit of Brotherhood they have displayed at all the meetings I have attended. They indeed showered me with friendship and hospitality that know no bounds. I rejoice greatly that we have such a great number of grand brethren.

It is for your information that I mention the Grand Master's night, organized and put on in the spring by the two lodges of the City of Red Deer. All neighboring lodges are invited and sometimes there are a dozen lodges represented. It gives the Grand Master an opportunity of meeting many brethren at one meeting. This idea could very well be developed in a number of places throughout the province, for the convenience and benefit of all. I would strongly recommend to the brethren this idea of joint meetings.

June, 1948.

- 10-14—Fraternal Visit, Grand Lodge of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon.
- 19—Mountain View Lodge No. 16, Olds.
- 25—Finance and Benevolent Committee, Calgary.

July

- 6—Kitchener Lodge No. 95, Rimbey.
- 7—Beaver Lodge No. 56, Castor.
- 11—Eureka Lodge No. 10, Funeral W. Bro. Jesse Fraser, Lacombe.

- 13—District Meeting, District No. 13, Fairview.

- 15—Grande Prairie Lodge No. 105, Grande Prairie.

Aug.

- 5—District Meeting, District No. 17, Irma.
- 6—District Meeting, District No. 5, Bawlf.
- 9—District Meeting, District No. 6, Nanton.
- 10—District Meeting, District No. 11, Vulcan.
- 11—District Meeting, District No. 7, Lethbridge.
- 12—District Meeting, District No. 8, Blairmore.
- 19—Ionic Lodge No. 45, Alix.
- 24—District Meeting, District No. 15, Bashaw.
- 25—District Meeting, District No. 9, Consort.

Sept.

- 1—District Meeting, District No. 4, Red Deer.
- 3—Ancient Landmark, U.D., Mirror.
- 7—Perfection Lodge No. 9, and Brethren from Olds, Crossfields and Innisfail, Calgary.
- 8—District Meeting, District No. 1, Banff.
- 9-10—Western Conference, Banff.
- 11—District Meeting, District No. 18, Calgary.
- 18—Concord Lodge No. 124, Percy Fielding presented with 50-year Jewel, Calgary.
- 23—Eureka Lodge No. 10, Official Visit, Lacombe.
- 24—Social evening and Ball, Eureka No. 10, Grand Master and Mrs. Henry presented with beautiful tray, Lacombe.

Oct.

- 1—Strathcona Lodge No. 77, 50th Anniversary Banquet and Program, Edmonton.
- 2—Commercial Lodge No. 81, Edmonton.
- 4—Apollo Lodge No. 27, Stettler.
- 5—Quarry Lodge No. 70, Redcliffe.
- 6—District Meeting, District No. 2, Medicine Hat.
- 9—District Meeting, District No. 3, Edmonton.
- 14—Eureka Lodge No. 10, P.D.D.G.M. of District No. 4, Lacombe.
- 15—District Meeting, District No. 10, Vegreville.
- 16—District Meeting, District No. 12, Edmonton.
- 17—Unity Lodge No. 51, Thanksgiving Service, Edmonton.

Freemasons or Dollars.—M.W. Bro. Dr. P. T. Pilkey, Grand Secretary of Manitoba.

The Employment of the Lodge Member.—R. Wor. Bro. H. B. Macdonald, Senior Grand Warden of Alberta.

A thorough discussion after each paper is expected.

Afternoon Session, 1:45 p.m.

What Are the Values of Fraternal Relationship?—R.W. Bro. Harry Coddington, Deputy Grand Master of Manitoba.

The Value of Music in the Lodge.—M. Wor. Bro. Roy G. Long, Past Grand Master of British Columbia.

Should Faithful and Efficient Service in a Lodge be Recognized by the Grand Lodge?—R. Wor. Bro. Robt. A. Tate, Grand Secretary of Saskatchewan.

Full Discussion.

Adjournment.

Annual Banquet, 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, September 11th, 9:15 a.m.

Forum.—

- (a) The Attitude of the Lodge to a Disabled Petitioner.—R. Wor. Bro. W. H. Moor, Deputy Grand Master of Saskatchewan.
- (b) The Essentials in the Examination of a Visitor.—R. Wor. Bro. W. H. Morgan, Senior Grand Warden of British Columbia.
- (c) What Are the Essentials of Vouching for a Visitor?—M. Wor. Bro. George Moore, Grand Secretary of Alberta.
- (d) Is Concurrence of Jurisdictions Advisable Among Constituent Lodges?—M. Wor. Bro. Fred Wilson, Grand Master of Saskatchewan.
- (e) What Must Be Done to Fulfil the Mission of Freemasonry?—M. Wor. Bro. Wm. A. Henry, Grand Master of Alberta.

Selection of meeting place for 1949.

Election of Officers.

New President's remarks.

Closing Prayer.

The Unaffiliated Mason

The unaffiliated member living in our midst has always been a problem, and still is. There are numerous members visiting lodges year after year, who have demitted from their home lodge, and refuse or neglect to affiliate with another. They continue to visit long after their demit has become outdated.

Then again there is that large number of Masons, who, just because they move to a new community, neglect to associate themselves with a new lodge, and in a few years forget they had even attended a Freemasons' lodge.

We should do everything in our power to reclaim these brethren. We should follow the provisions of our constitution, and also make our lodges attractive to visitors, and thus encourage them to wish to unite with us. In order to do this, we must be bright and cheerful

about our lodge room, as well as exhibit a genuine interest in our visitor. Our work must be above reproach, and our social hour a real period of friendship. There is a great wealth of material, proven Masonic material, in this unaffiliated group of brethren. Let us try to keep or reclaim them for active participation in our lodges. No not be afraid to approach them as soon as they come to your neighborhood, and you learn they are Freemasons—they will appreciate it.

Appreciation

I have much to be appreciative of. The splendid harmony and unity which prevail throughout our Jurisdiction, together with the genuine spirit of friendship and loyalty exhibited by our brethren. There are large numbers of brethren who have assisted me in many ways in the carrying out of my duties as Grand Master, in looking after my comfort while away from home, and who gave me of their friendship and companionship without being asked. To these Brethren I must just content myself by saying how much I appreciate your unselfish attentions. To one and all, thank you. To the District Deputy Grand Masters, I wish to pay special tribute for the splendid service rendered to the Craft during the past year. They have given freely of their time and talents, in order to carry on as they thought best for their brethren.

Much good can and does come from the earnest efforts of a District Deputy Grand Master. I have been greatly honored by the loyalty and willingness of the eighteen District Deputy Grand Masters, and my special representative to Yellowknife Lodge. I can only say I am thankful.

To our Grand Secretary, M.W. Bro. George Moore, I acknowledge a great debt, indeed. He alone knows how much I needed his help, and I alone know how freely he gave of his knowledge, his friendship, and his grand companionship. His great knowledge of the Jurisdiction and the problems presented in various portions thereof, as well as his close personal touch with a large number of our members, made our work much easier. Words fail to repay my debt to a Grand Mason.

To all the officers on my slate for the past year, I am deeply appreciative of your efforts to help along the work of Grand Lodge, as it came your way. No one ever had a more loyal, nor a more willing staff of officers.

Conclusion

While war and threats of war are present in many parts of the world, the Freemasons of this continent are privileged to meet and practice their noble work without molestation. Let us keep our eyes open and alert as well as prepared, to defend our right to the great freedoms we now possess. There is no denying the fact that the black cloud of Communism has engulfed much of the world; much that was once proud of its Freemasonry. Therefore, Brethren, guard well our portals, and at all times take a definite stand against Communism, or any ism that threatens our way of life, or prevents us from improving that way of life as we think fit.

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. By their fruits you shall know them. Do men gather figs of thorns or grapes of thistles?”